WHAT IS CLAIMED:

1. A method of performing a selected alternate dispute resolution procedure online comprising the steps of:

selecting at least one alternate dispute resolution professional;

setting up a main chat room accessible by the alternate dispute resolution professional and first and second disputing parties;

setting up a private chat room accessible by a selected one of the disputing parties and counsel for the selected disputing party for conducting private information exchanges;

activating a virtual presenter accessible in the main chat room for presenting evidence; and

conducting the alternate dispute resolution procedure through the exchange of information through chat in the main chat room and the presentation of evidence using the virtual presenter.

- 2. The method of Claim 1 wherein said steps of setting-up main and private chat rooms comprise the steps of setting up chat rooms accessible by a global computer network selected from the group comprising the Internet and World Wide Web.
- 3. The method of Claim 1 wherein the selected alternate dispute resolution procedure is selected from the group comprising arbitration, mediation, summary jury trial and focus group trial.

- 4. The method of Claim 1 wherein the selected alternate dispute resolution procedure comprises a method of performing a selected alternate dispute resolution procedure online in preparation for a subsequent alternate dispute resolution procedure.
- 5. The method of Claim 1 wherein said step of selecting at least one alternate dispute professional comprises the step of searching profiles in an electronic database.
- 6. The method of Claim 1 wherein the virtual presenter is operable to present evidence in a form selected from the group comprising video-deposition testimony, documents, photographs, graphics exhibits, audio statements and computer reconstructions.
- 7. The method of Claim 1 wherein the virtual presenter is operable to present arguments of lawyers.
- 8. The method of Claim 1 and further comprising the step of performing a post-procedure analysis.

9. The method of Claim 8 wherein said step of performing a post-procedure analysis comprises the substeps of:

creating a session record concurrent with said step of conducting the alternate dispute resolution procedure; and

performing content analysis on the session record.

10. The method of Claim 1 and further comprising the step of selecting a focus group for analyzing the alternate dispute resolution procedure.

11. A computer network for implementing alternate dispute resolution procedures comprising:

a plurality of interconnected terminals operable to:

maintain a first chat room for exchanging information between an alternate dispute resolution professional and a plurality of disputing parties;

maintain a second chat room for exchanging confidential information between said professional and a first one of said parties; and

maintain a third room for exchanging confidential information between said professional and a second one of said parties.

- 12. The computer network of Claim 11 wherein said network is further operable to maintain a virtual caucus room for exchanging information between a selected disputing party and counsel representing said selected party.
- 13. The computer network of Claim 11 wherein said network implements a presenter operable to present audio and visual presentations to selected ones of the parties and the professional through corresponding ones of said terminals.
- 14. The computer network of Claim 11 wherein at least one of said terminals communicates with said server via a global computer network selected from the group comprising the Internet and World Wide Web.

- 15. The computer network of Claim 11 wherein said first chat room simulates an assembly room.
- 16. The computer network of Claim 11 wherein the professional communicates with said parties through said second and third chat rooms via pop-up screens.
- 17. The computer network of Claim 11 and further comprising a database for selecting said alternate dispute resolution professional.
- 18. The computer network of Claim 11 and further comprising a database for selecting a settlement scientist for analyzing a said alternate dispute resolution procedure conducted using said computer network.
- 19. The computer network of Claim 11 wherein said first chat room simulates a courtroom.
- 20. The computer network of Claim 19 and further comprising a chat room for jury deliberations.